

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0000
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USCINCEUR
CINCUSNAVEUR
CINCUSAFE
CINCUSAREUR
USNMR SHAPE
USDOCOSOUTH
AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 9245

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, GR
SUBJECT: NOVEMBER ELECTIONS: THE POLITICAL LINE-UP

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THE ANNOUNCEMENT ON OCTOBER 6 OF THE FORMATION
OF A PARTY OF THE FAR RIGHT, CALLING ITSELF NATIONAL CAMP
(ETHNIKI PARATAXIS), COMPLETES THE LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL PARTI-
CIPANTS IN THE NOVEMBER 20 GREEK NATIONAL ELECTIONS. NATIONAL
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CAMP BRINGS THIS LIST TO A TOTAL OF SEVEN PARTIES OR, MORE AC-
CURATELY, SIX PARTIES AND ONE COALITION, IN ADDITION TO WHICH
SEVERAL MINOR SPLINTER GROUPS WILL ALSO CONTEST THE ELECTIONS.
RANGING FROM RIGHT TO LEFT THE SEVEN PRINCIPAL CONTENDERS ARE:
NATIONAL CAMP, NEW DEMOCRACY, THE NEW LIBERAL PARTY, THE UNION OF
THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER, THE PANHELLENIC SOCIALIST MOVEMENT, THE
ALLIANCE OF PROGRESSIVE AND LEFTIST FORCES (A COALITION OF FIVE

PARTIES), AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREECE. SO FAR ONLY TWO PARTIES HAVE RELEASED LISTS OF CANDIDATES. ALL PARTIES, HOWEVER, HAVE ALREADY STARTED THEIR ELECTION ACTIVITIES AND THE CAMPAIGN, AND EVERYTHING RELATED TO IT, NOW DOMINATES THE ATHENS PRESS AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO DO SO FOR THE NEXT SIX WEEKS. ALTHOUGH IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO MAKE ANY FIRM PREDICTIONS, THE GENERAL CONSENSUS HERE AS OF NOW IS THAT PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS WILL AGAIN HAVE A MAJORITY IN THE NEW PARLIAMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. NATIONAL CAMP (NC) -- THE CREATION OF A FAR RIGHT PARTY HAS BEEN TALKED ABOUT AND RUMORED SINCE EARLY 1975. ITS FORMATION WAS FINALLY ANNOUNCED LAST WEEK BY 78-YEAR-OLD FORMER PRIME MINISTER STEPHANOS STEPHANOPOULOS. NC IS BEING FORMED BY DISCONTENTED CONSERVATIVES (ROYALISTS AND OTHERS, INCLUDING JUNTA SYMPATHIZERS) WHO ARE DISSATISFIED WITH CARAMANLIS BECAUSE HE HAS NOT FOLLOWED AN ULTRA CONSERVATIVE COURSE. (THEIR COMPLAINTS INCLUDE HIS LEGALIZATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, GREECE'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE MILITARY COMMAND STRUCTURE OF NATO, THE COMPLETE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, ALLEGED LEFTIST INFLUENCE IN THE SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES, ETC.) THE PARTY OBVIOUSLY HOPES TO CAPTURE THE CONSERVATIVE "PROTEST VOTE" OF ALL THOSE ON THE RIGHT WHO ARE UNHAPPY WITH CARAMANLIS. WHATEVER SUCCESS IT MAY HAVE IN THE ELECTIONS WILL THUS BE PRIMARILY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE NEW DEMOCRACY (ND) PARTY. TWO ND DEPUTIES (ONE A WELL-KNOWN ROYALIST AND THE OTHER STEPHANOPOULOS' NEPHEW) HAVE ALREADY DEFECTED TO THE NATIONALIST CAMP. MUCH OF NC'S PROSPECTS WILL DEPEND, HOWEVER, ON THE CANDIDATES

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IT FIELDS, AND UNTIL ITS FULL ELECTORAL LIST IS PUBLISHED, IT IS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS THE EXTENT OF ITS IMPACT ON THE VOTE.

3. NEW DEMOCRACY (ND) -- THE BIG WINNER IN 1974 (THANKS TO CARAMANLIS), ND GOT 54.37 PERCENT OF THE VOTE AND EVENTUALLY ENDED UP WITH 215 SEATS IN THE PARLIAMENT. THERE IS A GENERAL EXPECTATION THAT ND WILL AGAIN EMERGE AS THE MAJORITY PARTY. THE QUESTION IS BY HOW MUCH AND WHETHER THE APPEARANCE OF A FAR RIGHT PARTY (NC) WILL SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE ND'S PERCENTAGE OF THE VOTE. THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF BELIEVES ND WILL REPEAT OR EVEN EXCEED ITS 1974 PERFORMANCE. OTHER OBSERVERS ARE LESS CONFIDENT OF THIS, HOWEVER, AND BEFORE THE FORMATION OF NC WERE FORECASTING A SLIGHT DROP TO AROUND 50 PERCENT, GIVE OR TAKE A FEW PERCENTAGE POINTS, ON THE GROUNDS THAT ANY PARTY IN POWER INEVITABLY SUFFERS SOME LOSS OF SUPPORT. IN ANY CASE THOUGH, IT IS GENERALLY EXPECTED AT THIS POINT THAT ND WILL RETAIN A SOLID MAJORITY IN THE NEW PARLIAMENT.

4. NEW LIBERAL PARTY (NLP) -- ALSO, LIKE ND, SEEKING SUPPORT FROM THE CENTER AND CENTER-RIGHT, IS FORMER MINISTER CONSTANTINE MITSOTAKIS AND HIS RECENTLY FORMED PARTY. WHILE CONTESTING THE ELECTIONS ON A NATIONAL SCALE, NP IS NOT EXPECTED TO GAIN MUCH OF

A FOLLOWING OUTSIDE ITS LEADER'S NATIVE CRETE. WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT, HOWEVER, IS NOT THE OVERALL ELECTORAL STRENGTH THE NLP WILL DEMONSTRATE, BUT RATHER THE FACT THAT MITSOTAKIS HIMSELF IS EXPECTED TO BE ELECTED AND THUS BE ABLE TO RETURN TO AN ACTIVE NATIONAL POLITICAL ROLE. (AS WE HAVE REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, WE BELIEVE THAT MITSOTAKIS IN ANY CASE IS LOOKING BEYOND THESE ELECTIONS TO THE NEXT ROUND WHEN HE HOPES TO EMERGE AS CARAMANLIS' SUCCESSOR.)

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BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

5. UNION OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER (UDC) -- UNTIL RECENTLY, MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVED UDC WOULD DO LESS WELL THAN IN 1974 WHEN IT WON 20.4 PERCENT OF THE VOTE AND EVENTUALLY ENDED UP WITH 57 SEATS IN PARLIAMENT (FOLLOWING THE DEFECTION OF FOUR OF ITS MEMBERS), AND WAS THUS THE PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION PARTY. UDC SPIRITS WERE

BUOYED BY THE POPULAR RESPONSE TO ITS FIRST ELECTION RALLY IN LARISSA TWO WEEKS AGO, HOWEVER, AND IT LOOKS AS THOUGH THERE WILL BE A REAL BATTLE WITH PASOK FOR THE NUMBER TWO PLACE. IN FACT, THE
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LEADERS OF THE TWO PARTIES HAVE ALREADY BEGUN EXCHANGING HEAVY SALVOS, EACH ATTACKING THE OTHER FOR MAKING A CARAMANLIS VICTORY POSSIBLE AGAIN BY SPLITTING UP THE CENTER.

6. PANHELLENIC SOCIALIST MOVEMENT (PASOK) -- AS NOTED ABOVE, SO FAR THE UDC APPEARS TO BE PASOK'S MAIN TARGET, AND VICE VERSA. PASOK WON 13.58 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN 1974 AND ENDED UP WITH 15 SEATS IN PARLIAMENT. THE PARTY HAS CREATED THE IMPRESSION IT WILL DO BETTER THIS TIME AND IS CLEARLY CHALLENGING UDC FOR THE ROLE OF PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION PARTY. IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO TELL, AND A SHIFT IN ONLY A FEW PERCENTAGE POINTS COULD BE CRITICAL IN DETERMINING WHICH OF THE TWO EMERGES FROM THE ELECTION AS THE SECOND PARTY.

7. ALLIANCE OF PROGRESSIVE AND LEFTIST FORCES (APLF) -- EFFORTS EARLIER THIS YEAR TO BRING ABOUT A DEGREE OF ELECTORAL COOPERATION AMONG ALL OPPOSITION PARTIES FAILED. INSTEAD, FIVE SMALL LEFTIST POLITICAL GROUPS SUCCEEDED IN FORMING THE ALLIANCE AND WILL BE COOPERATING IN THE ELECTIONS. THE ALLIANCE IS COMPOSED OF THE UNITED DEMOCRATIC LEFT (EDA) WHOSE LEADER, ILIAS ILIOU, WILL ALSO HEAD THE ALLIANCE AS PRIMUS INTER PARES. THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE INTERIOR (KKE - INTERIOR) IS ALSO PARTICIPATING ALONG WITH THE SOCIALIST INITIATIVE (SI) GROUP. (THE LATTER WAS FORMED BY FOUR DEPUTIES WHO DEFECTED FROM THE UDC, ONLY TO HAVE ONE OF THE FOUR SUBSEQUENTLY DEFECT FROM SI.) THE OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN THE ALLIANCE ARE SOCIALIST PATH (SP -- FORMED LARGELY BY DEFECTORS FROM PASOK), AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY (CD). NEITHER IS REPRESENTED IN THE PRESENT PARLIAMENT WHICH WILL BE DISSOLVED OCTOBER 20, ALTHOUGH A CD MEMBER WAS ELECTED TO PARLIAMEN IN 1974 ON THE UDC TICKET. FEW OBSERVERS GIVE THE ALLIANCE MUCH CHANCE IN THE ELECTIONS, ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE COALITION'S MORE PROMINENT MEMBERS (SUCH AS ILIOU AND POSSIBLY EUROCOMMUNISTS DRAKOPOULOS AND KYRKOS) COULD GET ELECTED.

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8. COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREECE (KKE OR KKE EXTERIOR) -- THE KKE HAS STAKED OUT ITS OWN POSITION AND IS RUNNING INDEPENDENTLY. IN THE 1974 ELECTIONS IT FORMED THE UNITED LEFT WITH EDA AND KKE INTERIOR AND TOGETHER THEY RECEIVED 9.47 PERCENT OF THE VOTE AND EIGHT SEATS IN PARLIAMENT (KKE - 5, EDA - 1, KKE INTERIOR - 2), KKE IS

PROBABLY THE BEST ORGANIZED PARTY IN GREECE AND ENJOYS AMPLE FINANCING. ITS LEADER, PARTY FIRST SECRETARY FLORAKIS, CLAIMS KKE WILL OBTAIN 9-10 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN THESE ELECTIONS AND, IN ANY CASE, KKE IS LIKELY TO RETAIN ITS FIVE SEATS. FOR THE KKE THE MOST IMPORTANT ELECTION OBJECTIVE, PERHAPS, IS TO DESTROY THE DISSIDENT KKE INTERIOR AND A LOT OF ITS EFFORTS ARE AIMED IN THAT DIRECTION.

9. IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE, THERE ARE SEVERAL MINOR GROUPS CONTESTING THE ELECTIONS (SUCH AS THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST MOVEMENT OF GREECE ON THE EXTREME LEFT) BUT NONE OF THEM IS SIGNIFICANT OR LIKELY TO ELECT ANY OF ITS CANDIDATES.
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